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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1738
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 9932
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9814
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4555
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 1179
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 6864
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 5791
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000477

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/04/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PINR](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: NO CONTEST: PAKISTAN'S SENATE ELECTIONS

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 182
[1](#)B. ISLAMABAD 378

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

[1](#)1. (C) National and provincial legislators gathered in their respective chambers March 4 to elect 50 new senators to Pakistan's 100-member upper house (ref A). Senators are hand-picked by their party leaders, elected indirectly not by popular vote, and serve six-year terms. Pakistan's Election Commission (ECP) is expected to notify all 50 winning senatorial candidates by March 6. They will be sworn-in on/about March 12. Para 4 lists party strength before and after the March 4 vote; para 5 describes how each party performed by province/region.

[1](#)2. (C) The March 4 Senate results reflect the popular wins on February 18, 2008, by the now ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and leading opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). With this election, the PPP becomes the largest single party and the PPP-led coalition has a majority in the Senate. Conversely, former President-General Pervez Musharraf's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and the religious conservative parties lost considerable strength, because they had the most senators up for re-election and lost political power in the last general elections. With only half the Senate turning-over, however, both the PML and religious parties still control significant blocks.

[1](#)3. (C) Thirty-one of the 50 seats were settled upon by the parties (coalition and opposition) even before the February 25 Supreme Court decision disqualifying the PML-N's Sharifs from elected office. Though the last seven days have seen disrupting demonstrations, particularly throughout Punjab, Election Day was relatively quiet. PML-N Spokesperson Siddiq ul Farooq assured PolOff March 3, "The election process will not be hindered." The federal and provincial capitals saw marginal increases in security precautions around the various assembly buildings to ensure the legislators' voting was not disturbed. The Punjab and Sindh Provincial Assemblies did not even meet because the parties had agreed to uncontested slates beforehand (ref B); seats remaining open through today's formal polling were assumed to have gone to the highest bidder.

[1](#)4. (U)

Party Name : Previous # of Seats - # of Seats Contested #
of Seats Won = New # of Seats

Awami National Party (ANP) : 2 - 1 5 = 6

Balochistan National Party-Awami (BNP-A) : 2 - 1 1 = 2
 Independent (including FATA reps) : 11 - 7 8 = 12
 Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) : 5 - 3 0 = 2
 Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) : 1 - 0 0 = 1
 Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur (JUI-F) : 12 - 4 3 = 11
 Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Sami (JUI-S) : 1 - 1 0 = 0
 Mutahidda Quami Movement (MQM) : 6 - 3 3 = 6
 National Alliance (NA) : 1 - 1 0 = 0
 National Party (NP) : 1 - 0 1 = 2
 PakhtoonKhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) : 3 - 2 0 = 1
 Pakistan Muslim League (PML) : 37 - 17 1 = 21
 Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PML-F) : 1 - 0 0 = 1
 Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) : 4 - 3 6 = 7
 Pakistan People's Party (PPP) : 10 - 5 22 = 27
 Pakistan People's Party Sherpao (PPP-S) : 3 - 2 0 = 1

15. (U)

Province/Region : # of Seats Contested : # of Seats Won by Party

Balochistan : 11 : BNP-A = 1, Independent = 4, JUI-F = 2, NP = 1, PPP = 3
 Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) : 11 : ANP = 5, JUI-F = 1, PPP = 5
 Punjab : 11 : PML = 1, PML-N = 6, PPP = 4
 Sindh : 11 : MQM = 3, PPP = 8
 Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) : 4 :
 "independent" by law
 Islamabad : 2 : PPP = 2

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16. (C) Comment: The new balance of power in Pakistan's Senate directly strengthens Zardari's political hand. Two-thirds of the upper house is needed to amend Pakistan's Constitution, including the repeal of any provisions added by military regimes. Supposedly, therefore, the PPP-drafted 18th amendment repealing parts of Musharraf's 17th Amendment could now go forward with few obstacles. Also, two-thirds of a joint sitting of parliament -- the National Assembly plus the Senate -- is required to impeach the president. So, with the PPP-led coalition increasing its strength in this latest election, Zardari's control of governmental largesse, which has helped him consolidate his power within the PPP, appears more secure. End comment.

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